

REMARKS

Claims 1–24 are all of the pending claims, with claims 1, 7, 11, 17, and 21 being written in independent form.

I. Drawings

As requested by the Examiner, Applicant submits a Replacement Fig. 1 incorporating a “Prior Art” legend. The Examiner is requested to acknowledge receipt and indicate approval of Replacement Fig. 1 in the next Patent Office paper.

II. Abstract

The Examiner objects to the Abstract of the Disclosure presently on file because it exceeds 150 words in length. Applicant appropriately amends the Abstract to address the Examiner’s concerns. If any further amendment to the Abstract is believed necessary, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned to discuss any suggestions the Examiner may care to make.

III. Claim Objections

The Examiner objects to the claims for the reasons noted on page 3 of the Office Action. Applicant has amended the claims by implementing the Examiner’s helpful suggestions, thereby overcoming all of the raised claim objections.

IV. Claim Rejections on Prior Art Grounds

The Examiner rejects claims 17-24 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by US 5,171,965 to Suzuki et al. ("Suzuki"); and claims 1-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Suzuki in view of US 5,523,193 to Nelson ("Nelson"). Applicant respectfully traverses all of these rejections in view of the following remarks.

Each of independent claims 1, 7, 11, 17, and 21 recite (albeit in slightly different formats) that the trigger signal is controlled to compensate for "flash-to-flash time jitter." An exemplary, non-limiting embodiment of this feature is discussed in the Specification at page 16 (lines 25+). In this embodiment, during a first exposure, the actual flash time position is recorded. Subsequently, during a second exposure, a deliberate time offset may be implemented to compensate for the time jitter introduced during the first exposure. As is well known in this art, the time jitter relates to the time range over which the jitter of a pulse varies. Thus, the claimed invention is directed to controlling the position in time of the laser flash by adjusting the position of the laser trigger signal. The "flash-to-flash time jitter" feature of the claimed invention, in combination with the other features as recited in the independent claims, is not taught or suggested by the prior art relied upon by the Examiner.

The Examiner relies upon the Suzuki reference to teach most of the features recited in the independent claims, inclusive of controlling a trigger

signal to compensate for flash-to-flash time jitter. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Suzuki discloses a technique in which one shot (i.e., one exposure area) is exposed by a plurality of pulse exposures. To this end, Suzuki continuously detects the amount of laser exposure so that the last laser flashes can be set to a predetermined value so that the total exposure reaches a predetermined value. Suzuki does not, however, teach or suggest controlling a trigger signal to compensate for flash-to-flash time jitter. Indeed, the portions of the Suzuki cited by the Examiner merely indicate that the exposure of one shot via a plurality of pulse exposures compensates for fluctuations or errors in the outputs (or exposure amounts) of the pulses.¹ That is, Suzuki is directed to controlling the amount of exposures, but is not concerned with the timing of the exposures, much less with controlling a trigger signal to compensate for flash-to-flash time jitter.

In summary, Applicant believes that independent claims 1, 7, 11, 17, and 21 recite features that are practically and conceptually different than Suzuki. Furthermore, the secondary reference to Nelson is not believed to make up for the deficiencies of Suzuki noted above. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 7, 11, 17, and 21 are patentable, and that claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-16, 18-20 and 22-24 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

¹ Suzuki, col. 2, l. 20-34; and col. 5, l. 48 – col. 6, l. 6.

CONCLUSION

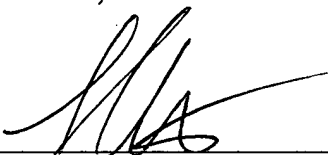
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of each of claims 1-24.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number of the undersigned below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 08-0750 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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JAC/HRH/bof

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

In Fig. 1, a “Prior Art” label is added.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet